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UNCLAS SECTION 01 OF 02 MASERU 000265

SIPDIS

SENSITIVE
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DEPARTMENT ALSO FOR AF/S

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TAGS: [KDEM](#) [PREL](#) [PGOV](#) [LT](#)
SUBJECT: LESOTHO: LCD HOLDS PEACEFUL MARCH TO DEMONSTRATE UNITY

REF: MASERU 258 AND PREVIOUS

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11. (SBU) SUMMARY: In order to demonstrate unity in the face of political opposition rhetoric and allegations of intra-party differences (reftel), the governing Lesotho Congress for Democracy (LCD) party held a march and rally in Maseru on Sunday, May 6 attended by an estimated three thousand supporters. Prime Minister Mosisili addressed the peaceful gathering with a message of party unity. The following day, Lesotho's Deputy Prime Minister privately called the recent silence of opposition figures "unsettling." Meanwhile, political parties continue to wait for the Southern African Development Community's (SADC) much anticipated report on opposition complaints regarding the February 2007 general elections. END SUMMARY.

A Peaceful and Sizable Show of Unity

12. (U) The governing Lesotho Congress for Democracy (LCD) party held a peaceful march and rally in Maseru on Sunday, May 6. The rally, intended to display the party's unity and public support for the LCD, was attended by Prime Minister Mosisili, several GOL Ministers, and other senior members of LCD. The Prime Minister's address at the rally specifically aimed to strengthen public perceptions of cohesiveness among top officials of the GOL.

13. (U) The LCD transported substantial numbers of supporters from outside Maseru, an opposition stronghold, to the peaceful and well organized rally in the capital. Observers estimated that supporters numbered between three and four thousand. Stressing that the party leadership is united and its support base intact, Mosisili told supporters that rumors of intra-party strife were intended to foment disunity which did not actually exist.

Comments from the DPM

14. (SBU) The day after the rally, Deputy Prime Minister Lehohla told Ambassador Perry and the DCM that the march and rally were "well attended and peaceful" and achieved their objective of demonstrating unity among party members and showing broad support for the LCD leadership. He said that only the Prime Minister and a representative of the LCD-aligned National Independent Party (NIP) addressed the crowd. Regarding the post-election political impasse between the governing party and the opposition, the DPM said that the lull in opposition rhetoric over recent weeks was "unsettling," observing that "when the dogs stop barking in the compound, you know that real trouble is afoot."

SADC Silence, Campaign Continues?

15. (SBU) COMMENT: The LCD rally comes at a time when the SADC Secretariat and the SADC Troika Chair (Tanzania) have remained

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conspicuously silent past April 30, the date by which Lesotho's opposition parties expected their election-related grievances to be addressed (reftel). Opposition parties now say they anticipate the Executive Secretary of SADC will speak on Lesotho's political situation o/a May 13. Tellingly, the large-scale political rallies regularly held by governing and opposition parties show a nation still in the tumult of election season. With the polling now three months past, the opposition continues its attempts to address grievances associated with the distribution of legislative seats, while the LCD and the GOL

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state they are keen to put the issue behind them and resume governing. END COMMENT.
PERRY